



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Good News: Deer Hunting Changes

Each fall, hundreds of thousands of hunters from all across Wisconsin and all over the country flock to our state's woods for the annual deer hunting season. These sportsmen and women enjoy being in the outdoors, the thrill of the hunt, bonding with family and friends, and so much more that is involved in the time-honored tradition of deer hunting. This season is looking good for deer hunters. There are also some new changes in store this season that I want to tell you about.

New this year, hunters do not need to wear back tags while hunting. It was my pleasure to author this change in law, Assembly Bill 415, this past session. We found that back tags are ineffective and unnecessary, often proving to be more of a burden to the hunter. From a practical standpoint, back tags were too small to see for enforcement and hunters found the tags just got in the way and were often misplaced.

Also new this season is a blaze pink option. Representative Milroy and I introduced this legislation this past session and it was signed into law, making Wisconsin the first state to legalize blaze pink while hunting. The University of Wisconsin came and showed us how, while deer have a hard time seeing blaze orange, they have an even harder time seeing blaze pink. Similarly, while hunters can likely easily see blaze orange, according to the UW, they can see blaze pink even better. My daughter and I just recently tested this out during the youth weekend hunt, and she had a great time in her blaze pink! Whether you wear blaze orange or blaze pink while out hunting, all hunters are still subject to the same minimum clothing coverage requirements.

Another change this year is the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR)'s new Go Wild system, which offers licenses and deer registrations all in one place, 24 hours a day. Through the Go Wild System, found at dnr.wi.gov/GoWild/, hunters are now able to purchase their deer hunting licenses, select their antlerless tag(s), print them, and register their harvested deer all conveniently online. Starting this year, there will be no over-the-phone license purchases; licenses must now be purchased online, at a license agent, or at a DNR service center.

As great as it is for hunters, the deer hunting season is fantastic for Wisconsin's economy as well. According to the DNR, last year, almost 850,000 hunters bought deer hunting licenses and took to the woods. These men and women often spend money at sporting goods stores, helping local economies across the state. In fact, each year, hunters spend \$2.5 billion in our state, including money spent on equipment and trip-related expenses. Wisconsin ranks second in the nation in the number of hunters, and over 130,000 hunters from outside Wisconsin came to our state to spend \$314 million while they were here for their hunting trips!

The traditional 9-day gun deer season starts the Saturday before Thanksgiving and this year runs November 19-27. There is also a muzzleloader season immediately following the traditional gun season and a 4-day antlerless hunt in December as well as an antlerless-only Holiday Hunt in selected areas, from December 24-January 1.

For any questions, DNR staff are available 7 days a week, 7am-10pm by calling 1-888-WDNRINFO (1-888-936-7463). You can also email the DNR any questions at <http://dnr.wi.gov/feedback/>. As always, you may also contact my office at any time. May you have a safe and successful hunting season!

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